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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

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Summary record of the 658th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 15 July 2004, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Açar

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention (*continued*)

Fifth periodic report of the Dominican Republic (CEDAW/C/DOM/5, CEDAW/PSWG/2004/II/CRP.1/Add.2, CEDAW/C/PSWG/2004/II/CRP.2/Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the members of the delegation of the Dominican Republic took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Mrs. Henríquez de Sanchez Baret** (Dominican Republic), introducing the report, said her country was incorporating into its development process the measures needed to achieve true gender equity, which was the cornerstone of a participatory democracy. It was committed to women's rights, having ratified the Convention in 1982 and its Optional Protocol in June 2001. As requested by the Committee, the fifth report, covering the period 1998-2001, had been updated to the first quarter of 2004.

3. According to the Central Bank's 1998 survey of household income and expenditure, in the Dominican Republic 28.7 per cent of households, and 33 per cent of the lowest-income households, were headed by women. In rural areas, 22 per cent of households were headed by women. The higher the household income, the more likely it was to be headed by a man. The same survey showed that 76 per cent of female-headed households were in Santo Domingo and in the other urban areas where the poorest population groups were concentrated, compared with only 64 per cent of male-headed households.

4. The country was currently undergoing an economic crisis which had compelled it to enter into a "stand-by" agreement with the International Monetary Fund. The text of that agreement expressed concern for its impact on vulnerable social groups, but there were no provisions in it to protect them. The Government's efforts to do so focused on containing inflation by controlling the exchange rate of the United States dollar and the prices of basic goods and services. It had recently allocated 2 per cent of gross domestic product to cushion the impact of the anti-inflationary measures on the spending power of individuals. While cutting subsidies for basic services, it had retained the subsidy on electricity for low-income people and the subsidy on butane gas for cooking. However, government spending on social welfare was constrained by the need for cuts in public expenditure in order to cover the country's domestic and external debt. The network of "people's markets" selling basic foods at low cost had been expanded. In August 2002 the Government's Social Affairs Cabinet had launched a national poverty reduction strategy, in line with the recommendations of the Economic Commission for Latin America, setting the poverty threshold at US$ 42.09 per head per month, compared with average purchasing power of US$ 85.80 per month. According to government estimates 12.8 per cent of the population, or 1,041,569 people, were below the poverty threshold. The Government, in conjunction with the Social Affairs Cabinet, was implementing 17 social support measures in health, nutrition and household income support, 24 social welfare programmes in health, education, basic infrastructure, housing and drinking water, and 45 poverty reduction programmes including measures in health, job creation and social security. In January 2001 the State Secretariat for Women (SEM) had initiated a programme to incorporate gender perspectives into the work of government agencies, in line with Presidential Decree 974-01. Sectoral gender equity units had been set up in each State Secretariat, in line with the National Gender Equity Plan (PLANEG). Gender-awareness training had been incorporated into public sector services. Social assistance programmes were targeted towards those living in extreme poverty, with the emphasis on women heads of households. The SEM had played a leading role in the process that had led to the promulgation of the Trading and Trafficking in Persons Act and the implementation of the national anti-trafficking plan. A reception centre had been set up for women victims of trafficking. Disabled women, migrant women and older women were helped by specific programmes under the National Poverty Reduction Plan. Monthly benefits of $300 a month were paid to 300,000 single mothers.

5. According to the Central Bank survey, 42.8 per cent of women over the age of 10 were in the workforce, compared with 68.4 per cent of men. Women represented 39.14 per cent of full-time permanent employees and 30.3 per cent of those working in the informal sector. Only 3 per cent of working women were in the agricultural sector, whereas 20 per cent worked in industry. Women earned between 61 and 76 per cent of men's wages, depending on their level of education. As of 2003, almost half the workforce employed in tourism had been women. The

SEM had agreed with the Programme for Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (PROMIPYME) to provide loans and technical assistance to a wide range of small firms.

6. Child labour was being combated through a joint initiative of the Department of Labour in the United States of America and the State Secretariats for Education and Labour in the Dominican Republic, under legislative decrees Nos. 144-97 and 566-01.

7. The Code of Criminal Procedure, the Penal Code and the Civil Code were being reformed with a view to ensuring gender equity. Various concepts were being refined and redefined, including gender and domestic violence and sexual harassment.

8. The SEM had 52 provincial and municipal offices for women, in addition to the gender equity offices in government departments. It was also supporting the implementation of Act No. 24-97 on domestic violence by providing gender awareness training for the police and public prosecutors and by providing shelters, as well as five specialist centres, for women victims of domestic violence. Between August 2000 and December 2003 the SEM technical team and the police had dealt with 74,159 cases of domestic violence.

9. SEM also coordinated the work of the inter-institutional support committee for migrant women. At the provincial and municipal levels, there were seven local networks for preventing trafficking in persons and supporting victims.

10. The gender approach was being incorporated into school subjects and curricula, training programmes for teachers and the 10-year national development plan for education.

11. In the health sector, there was a national plan to reduce maternal and child mortality which included a programme for the early detection of cervical and uterine cancer. Since 2002 a programme to prevent and deal with pregnancy among low-income teenagers had been in operation in seven areas of the country, in the framework of the national anti-poverty campaign. The situation of rural women was being addressed by a Women in Farming division within the Ministry of Agriculture, which ensured that public policies for agriculture incorporated a gender perspective. The same division financed training initiatives and support for women producing and marketing agricultural goods. The SEM had organized 12 regional meetings with rural women and women's organizations to identify problems and possible solutions in health, education, the environment, political participation and employment. The information obtained would be used to design policies and would be fed into the database for the agricultural census.

Articles 1-6

12. **Ms. Ferrer Gómez** asked for more information, especially in tabular form, about the cases of murders of women mentioned in paragraph 3.3.1 of the report. The proposed reforms of the Penal Code seemed very reasonable. However, the legislation on violence against women, specifically Act No. 24-97, did not seem to reflect the definition of gender violence contained in the Convention of Belém Do Pará, and that raised an apparent contradiction between the international norm binding upon the State party and domestic law. She wondered what was being done to reform the penal provision whereby a criminal sentence for rape could be suspended if the offender married the victim, and also why incest was not treated as a criminal offence. Moreover, the Government's response to the list of issues raised by the pre-sessional working group (CEDAW/PSWG/2004/II/CRP.2/Add.1) did not contain any evaluation of the benefits brought to the population by the national anti-poverty strategy.

13. She expressed concern that if mediation was mandated in court cases involving violence against a woman, the prosecutions would be discontinued, leaving the perpetrators free to strike again. Noting that the main objective of the Convention was not merely equity but equality, linked to the concept of social justice, she asked whether the assessment of the National Gender Equity Plan had been completed as scheduled in June 2004, and whether any changes were contemplated. She would also like to know whether the Government was taking action to protect women subjected to sexual slavery through international trafficking rings — for example, by prosecuting the traffickers or concluding cooperation agreements with other countries.

14. **Ms. Coker-Appiah** observed that the report (CEDAW/C/DOM/5, sect. 3.3.3) stated that one of the main functions of the National Commission for the Prevention of Domestic Violence was to monitor the enforcement of the legislation against violence, Acts Nos. 24-97 and 14-94. However, it was acknowledged (report, sect. 3.3.2) there was inadequate specialized

care for victims of domestic violence other than that provided by non-governmental organizations, and that there were no safe houses for victims. She would like information on what the Government was doing to remedy that situation, to help fund the private organizations active in the field and to know what percentage of the total national budget and of the health budget was allocated to dealing with domestic violence. In the next report, statistics and information should be provided on the impact of the various programmes in the field.

15. **Ms. Gnacadja** noted that the reform of the Civil and Penal Codes seemed to have left discriminatory provisions in place. The Government's response to question 20 of the list of issues (CEDAW/PSWG/2004/II/CRP.1/Add.2) gave no information on the five special police stations for the protection of women against domestic violence; she wondered what had been the impact of the women's protection squads set up in some cities (report, sect. 3.2). Also, the promised statistics in the response to question 21 of the list of issues had not been provided and that should now be done orally.

16. **Ms. Achmad** said the Government's assessment of the Beijing Platform for Action (report, sect. 3.5.1) indicated that not much had changed to improve the status of women or to change sexist practices and stereotypes. The responses to questions 18 and 19 of the list of issues showed that the situation was not very satisfactory with regard to the portrayal of women in the media, which should act instead as agents for changing mentalities and raising awareness. Those working in the media clearly needed training in gender issues. She asked whether the Government intended to study the impact of the activities described in responses 18 and 19 and whether it had made any effort to raise the consciousness of media professionals or offered prizes or other incentives for programmes reflecting the advantages of the equality between men and women.

17. **Ms. Gaspard** said that normally when a national plan used the word "equity" rather than "equality", it was an indication of less than full commitment to promoting true equality. She asked how many women there were in the overcrowded prisons, the grounds on which they had been imprisoned and what was being done to rehabilitate them. It would be interesting to learn the difficulties encountered in putting into effect temporary special measures under article 4, paragraph 1, such as the electoral quota.

18. **Ms. Tavares da Silva** said that although the report gave very little information concerning article 5, the response to the list of issues and the oral introduction indicated that something was being done in the broad area covered by that article. Concerning prostitution and trafficking in women, addressed in article 6 of the Convention, the report indicated (sect. 3.6) that the Government had done no studies on the numbers of women working in the sex industry, although a non-governmental survey estimated that the number had almost doubled between 1998 and 2000. Although the report referred to greater social acceptance and amenities for the sex workers, the fact remained that they were women driven by poverty and a very crude reality into the work they were doing. The response to question 20 regarding the punishment of exploiters of prostitution indicated that there were penalties only for those who exploited minors under the age of 18, yet such exploitation violated article 6, regardless of the age of the victim.

19. **The Chairperson** invited the delegation to respond to the Committee's questions.

20. **Mr. Mesa** (Dominican Republic) said that the missing statistics regarding violence against women and family violence were indeed available and would be distributed to the Committee. There were figures on the number of cases investigated, the number of homicides or suicides, the types of violence, the age of the victims and the number of prosecutions. The number of complaints brought to the various government departments dealing with violence against women and family violence had ranged from approximately 8,000 cases in 2000 to 10,000 in 2001, 13,000 in 2002, 8,000 in 2003 and 1,000 as of May 2004. During the same years, the private women's protection squads set up in two cities had received approximately 5,500 complaints in 2000, 1,200 in 2001, 7,000 in 2002, 13,000 in 2003 and 4,000 as of May 2004.

21. The draft amendments to the Penal Code were currently in committee in the Chamber of Deputies, which was studying all the proposals for reform submitted by the State Secretariat for Women in conjunction with a coalition of non-governmental organizations. A definition of domestic violence could be considered.

22. The State Secretariat for Women, as part of the campaign to combat domestic violence, had sponsored a radio programme, "Know Your Rights", to sensitize both men and women to the issues. It was broadcast two hours a week and covered all aspects of women's rights and the treatment of women and would be an excellent vehicle for familiarizing the public with the provisions of the Convention. The State Secretariat was also sponsoring well-attended workshops offering training in gender issues, in cooperation with the National School for the Judiciary, to judges and to personnel at all levels in the Public Prosecutor's Office. There were workshops for the public, which was also being reached through special comic books, community activities and courses in the schools. From 2002 to 2004 the Department of the Counsel for the Defence of Women Against Violence had worked together with the National Commission for the Prevention of Domestic Violence on activities that would reduce domestic violence and violence against women: there was a short-term plan to use regional and local networks to lessen the impact of violence by motivating schools and universities, churches and professional associations to build solidarity and harmony. The appropriate educational materials were being developed by the State Secretariat of Education. In addition, the women's protection squads attached to the National Police, referred to earlier, had been extended to other cities. As discussed in the report (sect. 3.3.3), a National Model for Care and Prevention in the Field of Domestic Violence had been developed as a way of implementing Act No. 24/97. It established guidelines for making the best use of available resources in the various sectors, by focusing on agreed areas and promoting coordination between the State Secretariat for Women, the State Secretariats of Education, Public Health and Social Welfare, the National Police, the National School for the Judiciary and the Supreme Court, and their regional and local branches. In addition, the local networks to combat family violence referred to earlier undertook activities at the community level. The networks, now set up in various parts of the country after a pilot project in the capital, were composed of regional and local representatives of the institutions comprising the National Commission for the Prevention of Domestic Violence. Judges, teachers, public prosecutors, the police and members of the community were given training patterned on an international model on gender issues and family violence. In 2002 and 2003, 50,000 women had participated in community meetings to discuss the provisions of Act. No. 24-97. Various brochures, manuals and publications on all those activities were available for distribution to the Committee.

23. Recent legislation had called for the establishment of safe houses and there were currently two in operation, a shelter for battered women and a shelter for victims of family violence.

24. In 2003 the Secretary of State for Women had submitted a draft on trafficking, which had been approved by the Congress and enacted by the President of the Republic as the Trading and Trafficking in Persons Act. A campaign had been initiated to raise awareness of the Act, including radio programmes, press articles and the dissemination of the Act among the agencies making up the Inter-agency Committee for the Protection of Migrant Women (CIPROM), local support and prevention networks and provincial and municipal offices for women. Other measures taken included the provision of medical and psychological assistance, emotional support and employment training. Efforts had also been made to gather information about trafficking cases and disseminate information in destination countries. With respect to the draft amendment to the Criminal Code, he noted that planned headings included genocide, gender, sexual orientation, murder of women, violence, sexual violence, rape, incest, trafficking, attacks on the dignity of the individual, harassment and abandonment of family.

25. **Ms. Nivar** (Dominican Republic), responding to the Committee's question regarding the media's role in combating domestic violence, said that a network of journalists against domestic violence had been set up, and was very active, publishing journals and papers and holding meetings, in conjunction with the State Secretariat for Women. Efforts had also been made to encourage churches and the national media to use the term "domestic violence", which had not been the case in the past. Other awareness-raising campaigns made use of music, singing and various other art forms; as well as advocacy by sports personalities. The penalties imposed for violence against women and children were included in the recently introduced Trading and Trafficking in Persons Act. Concerning coverage of domestic violence by the Criminal and Civil Codes, she noted that non-governmental organizations, government bodies and organizations of civil society

had studied the draft Criminal Code and had determined that violence against women was not adequately addressed. However, the State Secretariat had submitted new proposals, and they had received broad support. The Secretariat was also preparing proposals for revision of the Civil Code. Lastly, she noted that the law established a 33 per cent quota for women candidates to Congress, and there was a proposal to introduce a similar threshold at the municipal and local levels.

26. **Ms. Díaz** (Dominican Republic), responding to a question by Ms. Gaspard concerning prisons, said that although some of the Dominican Republic's 32 prisons were overcrowded, the problem of overcrowding did not affect women particularly because only four of every 100 prisoners were women. The most common offences for which women were imprisoned were drug trafficking, transportation of drugs and theft.

27. **Ms. Shin**, referring to the State party's responses to the Committee's list of issues and questions (CEDAW/PSWG/2004/II/CRP.2/Add.1) asked the delegation to expand upon its use of the term "equity" instead of the term "equality" in its fifth periodic report. According to the State party's response, the term "equity" set out the premise that men and women were not equal individuals in terms of their real social, political, economic and cultural situation. The response also advocated programmes and actions that might not be the same for men and women, but would translate into a fair balance. In her view, if the State Party's National Gender Equity Plan was indeed attempting to achieve such a "fair balance", that would be problematical, since articles 1 to 16 of the Convention were wholly based on the concept of "equality", not "equity".

28. **Ms. Morvai** asked whether mediation and reconciliation strategies were used in domestic violence cases or whether the offender was held responsible, in accordance with the Committee's general recommendation No. 19 on violence against women. On a related issue, she had heard that victims of domestic violence were obliged to pay for their medical certificates. If that were the case, she urged the State party to change its practice. Prostitution was regarded as normal by public opinion in the Dominican Republic to an extent that she had not encountered in any other State party. She enquired as to the effect of prostitution on families and said that if the Government regarded prostitution as normal, she wondered how seriously she could take the State party's avowal of its commitment to women's dignity.

29. **Mr. Flinterman**, noting that the State party had referred to its ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention as a temporary special measure, wondered whether it understood the full meaning of article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention, on the adoption of temporary special measures. He noted the State party's obligation to publicize the Optional Protocol and enquired about the steps taken to spread awareness of the Optional Protocol among the legal profession, the judiciary, women's organizations and human rights organizations.

30. **Ms. Gabr** said that she would appreciate more information about the draft amendment to the Civil Code, and asked when the amended Code would come into force. She also noted that the State party's adherence to a number of international human rights instruments would have an impact on the planned amendment. She wished to know how the mechanisms established to guarantee women's rights were financed. With respect to the fight against poverty, and poverty among women in particular, she was concerned at the focus on assistance rather than partnership, and hoped that the State party could provide information about participation by women themselves.

31. **Ms. Šimonović** said she wondered whether the State party's constitution and National Gender Equity Plan made explicit reference to gender equality, or whether the term gender equity was used instead. Use of the correct terminology was extremely important for the protection of women's rights.

32. **Ms. Patten**, noting that the State party's electoral laws included a provision for electoral quotas, asked whether its Constitution included a provision for temporary measures, as envisaged under article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention. If so, she would like to know the exact wording of that provision, in order that the Committee might determine whether it was in line with the Convention. In that regard she referred the State party to the Committee's general recommendation No. 25, which clarified the meaning of article 4, paragraph 1. In addition to electoral quotas, temporary special measures might include legislative, executive and administrative measures, or regulatory instruments and practices, such as outreach and support programmes, the allocation and

resources, preferential treatment and targeted recruitment and promotion.

33. **Ms. Balcácer** (Dominican Republic) said that the Dominican Republic was aware that the achievement of equality was the goal of the Convention. Moreover, her country's Constitution established the principle of equality, in stipulating that all human beings were fully equal before the law. However, equality could not be achieved without equity, which referred to measures, policies and programmes designed to compensate for the difference that resulted from the discrimination to which women had historically been subject. Since the socio-economic, political and cultural realities of the lives of men and women were different, the impact of public policies would also be different. That was why her country's fifth periodic report and her delegation's response to the Committee's list of issues and questions stressed the need to implement equity-based policies as a means to achieve compensatory justice for women. The National Gender Equity Plan was thus designed to be implemented in all sectors and areas of national life, based on the underlying principle of equity. Progress had been very slow, due primarily to cultural resistance. However, the State Secretariat for Women had worked tirelessly in the various sectors to ensure its implementation.

34. In terms of positive measures, she referred to Act No. 12-2000 establishing quotas for women candidates to Congress. The Act obliged political parties to ensure that 33 per cent of candidates for election to the legislature were women, although the number of women ultimately elected to positions was not guaranteed. She also mentioned Act 13-2000 governing gender equality among persons put forward as mayoral and deputy-mayoral candidates. In the 2002 elections, 13 women had been elected as mayors. In addition, a number of programmes, administered by the State Secretariat for Women, supported female-headed households, which accounted for 28 per cent of the total number of households nationally.

35. Much remained to be done with regard to poverty reduction, but meaningful efforts had been undertaken in the form of poverty reduction strategies, comprising social assistance and welfare programmes focusing on low-income women. Historically, women had had few opportunities for employment and income generation; she stressed, however, that the increase in the number of female-headed households should not necessarily be viewed negatively. It was rather an issue of empowerment for many women who, for the first time, were able to have opportunities for employment and financial independence and to exercise decision-making power.

36. In response to the questions raised about sex workers, she explained that there was a union of women involved in prostitution which had done extensive work, including efforts to gain recognition for their occupation as a decent economic endeavour. The term "sex worker" was used by adherents to the movement itself, other women's organizations and the Government to refer to the women engaged in prostitution. Prostitution was a social phenomenon with local, national and even international implications, as there was a significant flow of women from the Dominican Republic to other parts of the world. Greater attention should be accorded to the situation of women who had few alternatives for earning a living for themselves and their immediate and extended families. The focus of programmes under the Trading and Trafficking in Persons Act (Act 137-2003) was to raise the awareness of women who worked abroad as prostitutes. Through various mechanisms, including training courses at consular missions abroad, it sought to equip them with information on human rights protection and available legal remedies. Traffickers themselves were punishable under the law.

37. **Ms. Henríquez de Sánchez Baret** (Dominican Republic), in response to a question by Ms. Morvai, said that victims of domestic violence received medical certificates at no cost whatsoever.

38. **Ms. Balcácer** (Dominican Republic) outlined a number of programmes under the Government's poverty reduction strategy, including the promotion of microenterprises for income generation, support programmes in the areas of health and agricultural financing and the promotion of popular markets aimed primarily at women who were heads of households. In addition, communal child care centres had been established for working women.

39. **Ms. Henríquez de Sánchez Baret** (Dominican Republic) said that programmes had also been undertaken to combat adolescent pregnancy and to assist low-income families with home repair and improvement.

Articles 7 to 9

40. **Ms. Khan,** referring to the Committee's concluding comments on the Dominican Republic's previous report, said that the Committee had expressed concern about certain discriminatory policies on nationality against Haitians and other minorities. According to the State party's response to the current list of issues, certain culturally determining factors hampered the application of the law on nationality. She wished to know what those determining factors were, and also sought clarification of the situation in which minorities found themselves without identity papers despite being born on Dominican soil. There had been reports that such minorities, born to foreign parents, were allowed schooling only up to the eighth grade, but were excluded from opportunities for self-actualization later in life due to their low level of education. The Dominican policy in that regard constituted a denial of access to education, citizenship and a livelihood.

41. She enquired about the criteria for granting microcredit, particularly whether minority women were required to present documents attesting to their nationality in order to be considered eligible for such forms of credit.

42. **Mr. Flinterman** asked whether the draft immigration bill had been adopted by the National Congress since the submission of the response to the list of issues. He also wished to know what changes were expected to be made through the adoption of the bill, or whether the bill took into account the needs of female migrant workers.

43. **Ms. Belmihoub-Zerdani** commended the Government of the Dominican Republic for the strength of political will it had shown in facing up to the social and economic situation, and for emerging relatively intact from the stringent conditions of structural adjustment and debt servicing. Although the efforts made in pursuit of gender equality were laudable, much remained to be done. With reference to political representation, she urged the State party to consider the adoption of measures such as legislation to allocate a specific number of seats for women in decision-making posts.

44. She would also appreciate an update on the achievements of the Women's Forum of Political Parties since its establishment in 1999.

45. **Ms. Saiga** enquired about the acquisition of nationality by foreign spouses married to Dominican nationals and the status of children born through such marriages, both in and outside the territory of the Dominican Republic.

46. She asked for further information on the contents of the draft immigration bill and the status on the agreement between the State Secretariat for Women and the International Organization for Migration.

47. **Ms. Patten** requested details of the wording of the draft immigration bill. She would like to know to what extent the proposed amendments contained in the draft bill would eliminate discrimination against immigrants and what the prospects were for its early adoption. She joined the previous speaker in requesting additional information on the status of children born in the Dominican Republic of Haitian parentage. Furthermore, were foreign women married to Dominicans able to retain their original nationality, and were they able to transmit that nationality to their children?

48. She asked to what extent the agreement reached between the State Secretariat of Education and the Central Elections Board to streamline the procedures for obtaining birth certificates needed for school enrolment had been implemented and what steps had been taken to ensure that the targeted groups benefited from that agreement.

49. **Mr. Mesa** (Dominican Republic) said that the State Secretariat for Women had worked directly with relevant bodies for the protection of migrant women in drafting the bill. Extensive coordination efforts were also under way with the Inter-agency Committee for the Protection of Migrant Women (CIPROM).

50. Under the Constitution, all persons born in the Dominican Republic, with the exception of foreign diplomats and persons in transit, were entitled to Dominican nationality. Attempts were being made through the State Secretariat of Education to formulate procedures to address the issue of access to education.

51. **Ms. Díaz** (Dominican Republic), responding to a question on nationality by Ms. Saiga, said that foreign women married to Dominicans benefited from positive discrimination, insofar as they acquired Dominican nationality automatically and maintained their original nationality; that was not the case for Dominican men married to foreign women. Children born in the

Dominican Republic were Dominican nationals. In the case of children born abroad to Dominican parents, there was an option for them to acquire Dominican status through a simple process of application to the interior ministry upon attaining the age of 16 years.

52. **Ms. Cubilete** (Dominican Republic) explained that serious attempts were being made, through a decision of the electoral board, to tackle the problem of persons without documentation of nationality or access to education. Dominican legislation governing children and adolescents ensured that all persons had access to social services, irrespective of their ethnic origin.

53. **Ms. Balcácer** (Dominican Republic) said, with regard to the granting of credit and economic rights, that in principle women were not required to present evidence of nationality in order to apply for loans. However, for some forms of informal credit, under poverty eradication programmes, funding institutions often had the policy of requesting identification of nationality and residence as a guarantee of compliance with repayment obligations.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.